

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No.: 10/625,907
Attorney Docket No.: Q76663

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please replace Figures 3, 12, and 14 with the attached, revised Figures 3, 12, and 14.

Attachment: 3 Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are all the claims pending in the application.

I. Drawing Objections

The Examiner objected to the drawings for not showing the image density detecting means, disposed in proximity to one of said rollers which is nearest to the pivot of the support frame, as maintained in claim 4. The Examiner also objected to the numbering of the belts in Figs. 12 and 14 of the drawing for not matching the reference numerals of the belts in the specification.

Applicant has corrected the drawings to show the missing image density detecting means, according to amended claim 4, "connected to the support frame, in proximity to one of said rollers which is the nearest to the pivot of said support frame," and Applicant has corrected the drawings to show proper numbering of the belts in figures 12 and 14.

Applicant therefore requests that the Examiner withdraw this objection to the drawings.

II. Specification Objection

The Examiner objected to informalities in the specification. Applicant has corrected the informalities in the abstract of disclosure and the specification.

The Examiner also objected to the specification as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for placement of the image density detecting means in proximity to one of said rollers nearest to the pivot of the support frame in claim 4. Applicant respectfully submits that proper antecedent basis for placement of the image density detecting means is provided in the specification page 7, paragraph 1, which recites:

...said image density detecting means is disposed in proximity to one of said rollers which is the nearest to the pivot of said support frame.

In addition, Applicant has amended the drawings and specification page 11, paragraph 2, to incorporate the following: “as shown in Fig. 3, an image density detecting means 18' may be connected to the support frame 9a, in proximity to the roller 14 which is nearest to the pivot of the support frame 9a.”

In view of above, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection to the specification.

III. Claim Objections

Applicant amends the claims to correct the misnumbered claim.

IV. Claim Rejection: 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being allegedly unpatentable over Sato (U.S. patent 6343198) in view of Endo (U.S. patent application 2002/0085849). Also, the Examiner rejected claims 3 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being allegedly unpatentable over Sato and Endo, in view of Kusaba (U.S. patent application 2002/0090234).

Of these rejected claims, only claims 1 and 4 are independent. In view of the substantial similarities between claims 1 and 4, Applicant discusses only claim 1 but respectfully submits that the following remarks are equally applicable to claim 4. Claim 1, as now amended, requires:

said image density detecting means is
connected to the support frame...

Neither Sato nor Kusaba mention an image density detecting means. Applicant agrees with the Examiner that Sato does not teach having a density detecting means¹, or the use of an

¹ See Office Action paragraph 2, page 6.

intermediate transfer belt. Applicant also agrees with the Examiner that Kusaba teaches use of an intermediate transfer belt².

Regarding the placement of an image density detecting means, Endo teaches that “on the intermediate transfer belt 8 suspended by the outer peripheral surface of the driving roller 9 arranged on approximately the farthest location from the fixing device 23, an image reading means 27 for reading the toner image transferred onto the intermediate transfer belt 8 is provided” (paragraph [0056]) and “...consequently the detecting accuracy can be improved without up-and-down fluctuation of the belt, when compared with the conventional structure which has no opposing member” (paragraph [0057]). Sato, Kusaba, and Endo all fail to teach an “image density detecting means is *connected to the support frame*.”

As well, even taken for what they would have meant as a whole to an artisan of ordinary skill, the combined references still fail to teach that the “image density detecting means is connected to the support frame” and the combined references would not have led such a person to the subject matter of independent claim 1 and 4.

An artisan of ordinary skill would not have (and could not have) combined the applied references in the manner suggested by the Examiner to produce the subject of either of independent claims 1 or 4, and therefore Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw this rejection of claims 1-6.

V. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

² See Office Action paragraph 3, page 6.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appl. No.: 10/625,907
Attorney Docket No.: Q76663

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

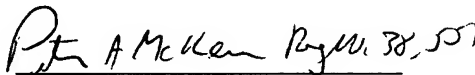
Respectfully submitted,

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER


Kelly G. Hyndman
Registration No. 39,234

Date: February 23, 2005